

A NEW VARIETY OF *CYRTORCHIS PRAETERMISSA* FROM ZULULAND.

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(*Palm Ridge, Mtubatuba*)

ABSTRACT

A new variety of *Cyrtorchis praetermissa* Summerh., *C. praetermissa* Summerh. var. *zuluensis* E. Harrison, is described.

UITTREKSEL

'N NUWE VARIËTEIT VAN *CYRTORCHIS PRAETERMISSA* VANAF SOELOELAND

'n Nuwe variëteit van *Cyrtorchis praetermissa* Summerh., *C. praetermissa* Summerh. var. *zuluensis* E. Harrison, word beskryf.

INTRODUCTION

During the preparation of a "*Field Guide to the Epiphytic Orchids of Southern Africa*" (Harrison, 1972), it was found that the Zululand plants, previously considered to be conspecific with the tropical *Cyrtorchis praetermissa*, differed from the tropical plants in a number of characters. These differences were considered sufficiently distinctive to merit formal taxonomic recognition. Consequently, it was decided to accord the Zululand plants varietal rank to distinguish them from the tropical material of *C. praetermissa*. This opportunity is now taken of describing and discussing the new variety.

Cyrtorchis praetermissa Summerh. in Kew Bull. 3: 279 (1948). Type: Zambia, MWINILUNGA District, just south of Matouchi Farm, *Milne-Redhead* 3146 (K. holo.) var. ***praetermissa***—Distribution:—Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Rhodesia, Transvaal.

Var. ***zuluensis*** E. Harrison, var. nov. affinis *C. praetermissa* sed plantae minoribus, foliis planis non carnulosa sed coriacea, vagina non rugulosa; calcar apice incurvata.

Type: Natal—2832 (Mtubatuba): Zululand, Hlabisa Distr., near Nyalazi R. bridge, (AB), 2/ii/1955, *Schelte* 5216 (BOL, holo.).

The stems, 8—14 cm long and 7—9 mm in diameter carry roots 3—4 mm in diameter. The eight to twelve closely-set leaves are 7—9 cm long and 1—1.3 cm

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broad; linear with rounded unequal bilobes. Usually two inflorescences 7—8 cm long are produced, each carrying twelve to fourteen flowers arranged in two ranks. The white flowers 1,5 cm across turn deep orange with age and the spur, 2,3—2,5 cm long, is curved with a hooked tip.

The chief differences between the two are the leaf characters and flower sizes. The leaves are linear and strap-shaped in the new variety whereas in *C. praetermissa* var. *praetermissa* they are leathery, deeply keeled and recurved. The flowers are slightly larger than in the typical variety, with narrower floral segments which curve back considerably with age. The spur is also slender with a pronounced tip. The aerial roots differ in colour—being grey, smudged with brown and having tips of reddish-brown.

Geographically, the two are widely separated and, although the new variety occurs in an amazing range of climate conditions, plant and flower characteristics remain constant in all localities.

In common with *C. arcuata* this new variety occurs in a range of habitats from hot, humid coastal forest to cool moist temperate forests. It also occurs in low rainfall areas which experience high summer temperatures. In all these varied localities, plants occur in large colonies; often hundreds of plants occupy a single tree in light to heavy shade. Distribution: Natal; Mtunzini, Lower Umfolozi, Hlabisa, Ubombo, Ngwavuma Districts.